

Local Biodiversity Action Plan Newsletter
Issue 12: May 2004



Scottish Biodiversity Week
22-30 May 2004

Scottish Biodiversity Week is nine days of events and activities ranging from Nature Reserve open days and guided walks, scrub clearance and moth walks, exhibitions and talks, making bird boxes and animal tracking.

Scottish Biodiversity Week is for everybody. The myriad of activities run during the week, across the whole of Scotland, are designed to help the public understand what biodiversity is, to encourage them to get involved, and to reinforce the message that what they are doing locally does have a national international, and global impact. In essence, our future "is in your hands".

There are over 200 events during the Week, so please do check out the list on www.ukbap.org.uk and www.scotland.gov.uk/biodiversity to see if there is an event in your area.

Contact: Jo Lenthall, Scotland LBAP Project Officer, Scottish Biodiversity Forum, 0131 311 6512 joanna.lenthall@rspb.org.uk for further details.

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy launch - 25 May 2004

Scotland's Biodiversity - It's In Your Hands

The launch of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy "In Your Hands: A strategy for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Scotland" will be by a Scottish Minister. Dr Alan Knight (UK Sustainable Development Commissioner and Head of Social Responsibility at Kingfisher), Graham Wynne CBE (Chief Executive of the RSPB), and Chris Packham (Naturalist, Author and TV Presenter) are also speaking at the event. Booking response has been very positive so please book soon if you haven't already done so. However, due to a huge demand for space, there is no further room for posters or displays.

See www.scotland.gov.uk/biodiversity for more details.

Contact: Kathrina Mannion, Project Officer, Scottish Biodiversity Forum on 0131 244 6328 kathrina.mannion@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Best Value and Biodiversity - guidance for local authorities

Please note the new working title for the publication (formerly Best Value, Community Planning and Biodiversity). In early January, it came to light that the proposed document did not fit the framework outlined in a guidance strategy produced by the Scottish Executive Best Value unit. This has now been resolved, with most of the original document still being relevant. Many thanks to everyone who commented on the original version; these will not go to waste. The 'new' publication offers best practice guidance to local authorities and other public bodies in Scotland to help mainstream the duty to "*further the conservation of biodiversity*" through the statutory framework for Best Value. The publication will nest neatly into, and will fully cross-reference with, separate "Best Value and Sustainable Development" guidance, being developed by the Scottish Executive. Circulation of a consultative draft of "Best Value and Biodiversity" will now be the end of March, with comments welcomed for the end of April. The final version will go to the printers by the end of May. A launch date of 9 September 2004, at Battleby, has been agreed.

Contact: Jo Lenthall, Scotland LBAP Project Officer, Scottish Biodiversity Forum, 0131 311 6512 joanna.lenthall@rspb.org.uk

Local Biodiversity Updates

Argyll & Bute

- **Community Action for Biodiversity Grant Scheme** Since the launch of this initiative by Deputy Minister for Rural Affairs, Allan Wilson, officers have been raising awareness about the grant and helping community groups achieve their project aspirations. Members of the partnership are helping to identify opportunities for funding local projects that they are involved in. The range of projects varies from specific species, to interpretation to woodland grazing and planting projects. Others in the pipeline relate to practical projects.
- **Saltmarsh/Jubilee Bridge Interpretation Project** Existing access path and bridge has been upgraded by the Environmental Task Force. Land Management is mostly cattle and some sheep, with grazing limited from May-mid October. A variety of flora and fauna can be seen all year round. This area is well used by walkers and those interested in photography and wildlife.
- **Catchment Management Project** Will provide information and guidance to both land managers and the local community on improving or maintaining quality land and freshwater in their catchment.
- **Red Squirrel Seminar/Workshop** Included surveying techniques at the Cregan's Inn. 15 delegates attended from various community groups in the Cowal and West Loch Lomond area. The Seminar was lead by Caroline Young (Community Biodiversity Officer) who gave a presentation on the Community Action Grant Scheme, whilst Marina Curran-Colthart (Local Biodiversity Officer) introduced the red squirrel SAP and Abbie Patterson (Species Recovery Officer, NTS) gave an excellent presentation and answered numerous questions on this flagship species.
- **Interpretation Seminar and Workshop** Seminar and workshop led by Donald MacPhillimy. 9 delegates attended from various groups and businesses including community trusts, hotel, crofting, estate and marine interests. The principles of interpretation with a critique of various interpretation mediums were covered. The delegates (in two groups) designed an Interpretation Panel, presented it and checked it against a points system for effectiveness. The feedback was excellent.
- **West Highland Woodland Grazing Project** This project aims to demonstrate how farming and forestry objectives can be integrated. The results of this project will lead to wider public benefit than just within the forestry and farming sectors. Management of key habitats and species alongside important landscape conservation will impact not only on local communities but also on the many visitors to Argyll, in addition to fulfilling some of our local and national obligations under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.
- **First Local Biodiversity Conference - 27 May 2004, Corran Halls, Oban, 11am-4.30pm** The focus of the Conference will be community biodiversity projects, partner action plan activity and workshops on marine issues, using woods sustainability, Local Plan and biodiversity implications, Good Agricultural & Environmental Condition and volunteer engagement. Refreshments and lunch provided from local produce Book your place by 5 May 2004 (details as below).

Contact: Marina Curran-Colthart, Local Biodiversity Officer on 01631 562125 marina.curran-colthart@argyll-bute.gov.uk www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/biodiversity

Ayrshire

Contact: Douglas Gardiner, Recycling Officer, East Ayrshire Council, 01563 554040 douglas.gardiner@east-ayrshire.gov.uk; Ken Gibb, Sustainable Development Manager, South Ayrshire Council, 01292 616288 ken.gibb@south-ayrshire.gov.uk; Tonia Sobieraj, Policy Officer, North Ayrshire Council, 01294 324131 tsobieraj@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

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Cairngorms

- The **Non-Native Fish Project** was launched in April. This project aims to survey water bodies on the Dee and Spey for the presence of non-native fish, question proprietors and owners regarding non-natives and pike fishing, raise awareness of the problems with using live-bait for pike fishing, introduce a pike fishing code of practice and generally raise awareness of the issues of non-native species. Successful launch with extensive press and radio coverage was in April.
- The **Upland Grain Project** is in its fifth and final year, and still going strong. This project works with 8-10 farmers and crofters who plant sacrificial crops for birds in Badenoch & Strathspey. A monitoring report covering years II and III was published recently and copies are available from Stephen.
- There are a **number of projects** being worked up at the moment including the setting up of an aspen tree nursery, a black grouse viewing hide, a squirrel survey ("the Great Cone Hunt"), butterfly habitat management workshops, moth survey and habitat management and many others!
- There is a large **LEADER+ bid** with Butterfly Conservation Scotland at the assessment stage and this project will target training in surveying at local people, raise awareness of moths and butterflies, and highlight the Cairngorms as an area to visit to see these species. If approved this project would start up at the end of 2004.

Contact: Stephen Corcoran, LBAP Officer, 01479 870528, stephencorcoran@cairngorms.co.uk

Clackmannanshire

- **Third Tranche draft out!** The final tranche of our BAP has been drafted and should be finalised in May. For more information please see the website. There's loads of other information and updates on the website so keep checking!
- **2004 Projects** Due to our small pot of project funds, the Steering Group has agreed a host of projects for the 2004 financial year. Many of the projects will build on the work of the 2003 projects like wild bird cover, grassland exclosures with butterfly monitoring and Schools Save Fish projects. One development will be the production of a biodiversity trails leaflet, due out soon, which will also include a Volunteer Wildlife Record Sheet. This Sheet will assist in both awareness raising and record keeping in the area, until a Local Record Centre can be established. For an updated list please see our website.
- **The long goodbye!** Finally, the time has come for this LBAPO to pass the (sustainable wooden) torch to another. In mid-June, I'm off to even greener pastures in the form of BC, Canada. Please do keep in touch and pop around if you are in that corner of the world (campbell_lynn@hotmail.com).

Contact: Lynn Campbell, Biodiversity Co-ordinator, 01259 452639, lynncampbell@clacks.gov.uk
www.clacksweb.org.uk/biodiversity

Comhairle non Eilean Siar

- Nancy Nicolson, presenter of the BBC's Grass Roots and Landward programmes, will **launch the Western Isles LBAP** during Scottish Biodiversity Week. The provisional date for the launch is Thursday 27 May in Uist. The text of the first three habitat and species action plans has been finalised and consultants are currently working on the design and layout of the plans. The LBAP will be bilingual with Gaelic and English versions (Council policy) and will be in two main parts. The first part is an introductory section entitled "Our Nature – A Framework for Biodiversity Action in the Western Isles". This part provides background information on the biodiversity planning process locally and nationally, objectives and generic actions for the Western Isles LBAP and details how individuals and communities can become involved in safeguarding biodiversity. The second part comprises the three finalised action plans for great yellow bumblebee (*Bombus distinguendus*), Native Woodlands and Saline Lagoons. A pdf version of the LBAP will be available on the Western Isles Biodiversity website following the

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launch. The Council's Sustainable Development Committee approved the three finalised action plans and "Our Nature – A Framework for Biodiversity Action in the Western Isles" on 21 April 2004.

- A **programme of events and activities** throughout the Western Isles is being organised for Scottish Biodiversity Week.

Contact: Anne MacLellan (Mon, Wed am, and Fri), 01870 602425, amaclellan@cne-siar.gov.uk
www.cne-siar.gov.uk/biodiversity

Dumfries & Galloway

- The first Dumfries and Galloway **Wildlife Festival** took place from 10 to 18 April 2004. Over 30 events, including guided walks, open days, illustrated talks, practical conservation work and an art exhibition, were organised by biodiversity partners across the region and, despite some mixed weather, well over 1000 people took part. In future years, as the festival grows, it will be used to attract tourists to the region at a time of year when many other tourist attractions have little to offer.
- A **local grant scheme** to enable communities to transform their green spaces into biodiversity areas will soon be open for applications. Funding is also being sought to employ a Community Biodiversity Officer to assist with this work.
- Despite rejection of the first funding application, a **project to identify and manage wood pasture** in the region goes on. The project has been revised and we will be seeking alternative funding.
- Following last year's very successful series of **butterfly workshops**, a meeting of all the volunteers was held in early spring and plans made for the forthcoming survey season.
- A **leaflet appealing for local water vole** sightings has been produced. Training in survey techniques has been organised in the past, but there now seems to be demand for another course, along with more general training in pond management, so a course will be arranged during the summer.

Contact: Peter Norman, Biodiversity Officer, 01387 260172, peter.norman@dumgal.gov.uk
www.dumgal.gov.uk/biodiversity

East Dunbartonshire

Contact: Paul Baker, Biodiversity Officer, 0141 578 8642, paul.baker@eastdunbarton.gov.uk

East Lothian

Contact: Stuart Macpherson, Biodiversity Officer, 01620 827242,
smacpherson@eastlothian.gov.uk www.eastlothianbiodiversity.org.uk

Edinburgh

Contact: Susan Steel or Caroline Peacock, Biodiversity Officers 0131 469 3920
susan.steel@edinburgh.gov.uk caroline.peacock@edinburgh.gov.uk

Falkirk

- Anna will be returning from maternity leave at the beginning of May. Martin has moved on to Access Officer within the council.

Contact: Anna Perks, Biodiversity Officer on 01324 504863 anna.perks@falkirk.gov.uk

Fife

Contact: Rachel Sherman, LBAP Co-ordinator on 01592 413437 rachel.sherman@fife.gov.uk
www.fifedirect.org.uk

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Glasgow

- Glasgow City Council has won a prestigious planning award in recognition of its contribution towards community planning and biodiversity at Hogganfield Park. The **Award for Planning for the Natural Environment** was presented to Councillor Marshall, at a ceremony in London hosted by the Royal Town Planning Institute in February 2004.
- A further **extension to the wetlands** at Hogganfield Park Local Nature Reserve has been carried out by the Council's Land Services. This will benefit water voles and breeding waterfowl.
- A **water vole monitoring programme** has been set up at Early Braes Park after the initial successes of the pond creation project at the site. Wetland and grassland planting is being carried out to enhance the habitats for water vole, amphibians and invertebrates. This is a partnership project between Kelvin Clyde Greenspace (funding), Scottish Wildlife Trust and Glasgow City Council, Land Services.
- **Amphibian monitoring** has been carried out at targeted ponds and wetlands, including recently created ponds at Cleddans Burn and Windlaw Farm. Both areas of new ponds have significant numbers of frogspawn clumps, demonstrating the success of the wetland works.
- A Schools Awareness Project "**Sowing and Growing in Glasgow**" has started with a workshop at the Glasgow Botanic Gardens being attended by 20 members of Glasgow's Biodiversity Group, and a useful amount of publicity being generated in the local press. The project, which is a partnership between Glasgow City Council and Scottish Natural Heritage, aims to carry out some of the actions in the Glasgow Biodiversity Awareness Strategy by involving 400 schools in growing native wildflowers in their school grounds and providing support and information about why local biodiversity matters.

Contact: Keith Watson or Carol MacLean, Biodiversity Officers on 0141 287 5665

keith.watson@land.glasgow.gov.uk carol.maclean@land.glasgow.gov.uk

<http://wildlife.glasgow.gov.uk>

Highland

- **LBAPs completed** Caithness, Sutherland, Skye & Lochalsh, Wester Ross
- **LBAPs undergoing consultation** Ross & Cromarty (East), Lochaber
- **Due by the end of 2004** Inverness & Nairn
- We will be launching our **own website** in June, which will have copies of all the Highland LBAPs on it - www.highlandbiodiversity.com

Contact: Janet Bromham, Biodiversity Officer, 01463 702274 janet.bromham@highland.gov.uk

Midlothian

Contact: Helen Dunlop, Biodiversity Officer, Midlothian Council, 0131 271 3462

helen.dunlop@midlothian.gov.uk

North East Scotland

Contact: Maria Hardy, LBAP Co-ordinator, 01224 711120 maria.hardy@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

www.nesbiodiversity.org.uk

North Lanarkshire

Contact: Jonathan Willet, Biodiversity Officer, 01236 780636 willetj@northlan.gov.uk

Orkney

Contact: Nadine Russell, Orkney Biodiversity Officer, 01856 888760

nadine.russell@orkney.gov.uk www.orkneybiodiversity.co.uk

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Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde

- **Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde LBAP** was successfully launched on 1st April.
 - There is still **no Biodiversity Officer** in post but this should be resolved by June.
- Contact:** Jenny Gough (temporary contact), jenny.gough@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Scottish Borders

- **Farming for Partridges & Sparrows year 2:** total now 76 farms sowing 81ha of WBC. GCT and RSPB monitoring of grey partridge and tree sparrow. Nest boxes at 3 sites, involving local schools. Biodiversity Officer is project co-ordinator and SBC are lead.
- **Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy (revised IFS):** Biodiversity Officer joint project manager with Landscape architect. Consultancy appointed February, timetable for completion is August 2004, ministerial approval by October.
- **Open Space audit** of SBC owned and managed sites. Audit being carried out by Land Use Consultants.
- **Borders Species and Habitats of Conservation Concern** document for Planners and Developers. Project carried out by Scottish Borders Biological records Centre for SBC and SNH.
- **Borders Backyard Biodiversity** project launched at Harestanes on 4 April.
- **Rivers & Burns HAP** published and presented to Allan Wilson, Environment Minister in November 2003. Native Woodland HAP, Maritime Cliff & Slope HAP, and Urban HAP to follow.
- **Development Plan** (revised Local Plan), the consultative draft to go out in May 2004. Technical guidance for biodiversity to be included.
- **LBAP Urban Habitat working Group** a wildflower verge project being set up with three settlements and community groups (Eyemouth, Hawick and Smailholm)
- **Riparian habitat network project** GIS mapping of 2 riparian habitat enhancement projects, with Tweed Forum leading.
- **Tweed Catchment Management Plan** has a new project officer in place to co-ordinate implementation of CMP.

Contact: Andy Tharme, Natural Heritage Officer, 01835 826514 atharme@scotborders.gov.uk

Living Shetland

- The **Living Shetland LBAP** will be launched on 21 May.
- A **full weekend of events**, to celebrate both the launch and Scottish Biodiversity Week can be found at <http://www.nature.shetland.co.uk/others/living.htm>

Contact: Nicky Davies, Biodiversity Officer, 01595 690832, livingshetland@fwag.org.uk

South Lanarkshire

Contact: Scott Riddell, 01355 806858, scott.riddell@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Stirling

- A draft **Biodiversity Strategy** has been produced aimed at getting the council to take a greater lead in enhancing Stirling's biodiversity, focusing on how the council might better manage open spaces etc with a view to making them more wildlife friendly. I am holding a workshop later this month, aimed at contract managers etc within the council, to garner support for this. Essentially the workshop will examine how best to improve biodiversity elements around the council buildings. Am hoping this will be a stepping-stone towards a greater acceptance of biodiversity management across council services.
- **Central Scotland Red Squirrel Group** I have taken over the running of this group, due to Lynn's imminent departure. Lynn has done a great job getting the group up and running and

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we have already had some tangible results. Only hope I can carry on with the same rate of success, we will certainly miss her on the group.

- Launching the **Stirling Biodiversity Grant Scheme** this month. This will replace the current community environment grant scheme and will be more LBAP focused.

Contact: Chris Waddell, 01786 442875 waddellc@stirling.gov.uk

Tayside

- **Second Tranche of the LBAP.** A further 10 HAPs and 15 SAPs will soon be available for public consultation.
- **"Wild and Wonderful"** The Tayside Biodiversity Exhibition will be at the Perth Museum from 22 May to mid-December. A comprehensive exhibition highlighting the biodiversity of Angus, Dundee, Perthshire and Kinross-shire. It will officially be opened by Simon Pepper on 20 May.
- The **'Safe Homes for Sand Martins'** project (Broughty Ferry beach) will be officially opening its 'sand martin wall' on 17 May. Recordings of sand martins are already being regularly played to try to attract the birds to use the new nest site.
- Broughty Ferry Environmental Project's **"Zoom"** initiative will involve biodiversity data being collected during the summer throughout the wider communities of Broughty Ferry, Douglas and Whitfield. Many events will be held to raise awareness of 'wildlife on your doorstep'.
- A grant from Forestry Commission Scotland enabled the **"Care and Management of Urban Trees"** seminar to take place in Perth at the end of March. Forty-five Local Authority staff from all over central Scotland attended: planners, landscape architects, woodland officers and countryside rangers from seven local authorities (Angus, Dundee, Perth & Kinross, Edinburgh, North Lanarkshire, Fife and Clackmannanshire). A number of Perthshire Tree Wardens also attended, as did several private consultants and Biodiversity Partnership members. The Perth Provost chaired the seminar. Presentations explored the potential for enhancing the value of woodlands and trees in housing developments and road improvements, including the legislation and knowledge needed to safeguard them. During the afternoon, 23 delegates joined the speakers in a walk and took part in an open discussion about the challenges and opportunities of mature trees in a potentially urban area.
- Funding from the three local authorities and SNH has **secured the LBAP Co-ordinator** post for a further 3 years.

Contact: Catherine Lloyd, Biodiversity Officer, 01738 476481 tayside.biodiversity@ukf.net

West Dunbartonshire

Contact: Rod McCreath (temporary contact) rod.mccreath@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

West Lothian

Contact: John Sheldon, Co-ordinating Officer, 01506 775278 John.Sheldon@westlothian.gov.uk

Continued overleaf ...

Events

Pearl-Bordered Fritillary - Identification and Recording Techniques Saturday 15 May 10am-4pm, Ben Cruachan

This workshop is designed to enable residents of Argyll to find out more about this rare and declining butterfly, and help with monitoring and survey work in the area. Participants will be able to learn the basics at the indoor session, and then at Ben Cruachan search for the butterfly in its habitat and practice monitoring techniques (meet at the Taynuilt Sports Pavilion). Booking is essential, contact Julie Stoneman, Butterfly Conservation Scotland Tel 0870 7706151 or Email jstoneman@butterfly-conservation.org for further information and a booking form.

Priority Moth Surveys for Volunteers In Scotland, 2004

BCS is looking for volunteers to help with surveys for four key moth species. The surveys are important to give a better picture of their current distribution and status in Scotland. This will allow us to undertake detailed surveys and research at occupied sites and aim to encourage sympathetic land management.

Square-spotted Clay: Conduct larval searches at other sites with older records (Barcaldine, Corran Ferry and Arisaig; Ayrshire, Peebleshire, Dumfries-shire, Kircudbrightshire) or light-trap for adults at these sites from late July to end August.

Barred Tooth-striped: Search or light trap for adults at sites with post-1981 records (Skye, Loch Creran and Thornhill, Dumfries) or other sites with older records (Canna, Fort Augustus, Ardnamurchan, Killiecrankie and Glen Trool) in April and May.

Netted Mountain Moth: Join our Netted Mountain Moth day in Newtonmore in early May to learn more about this species so you can get involved in a co-ordinated survey in the Cairngorms, Moray, Easter Ross, around Loch Rannoch and northern Perthshire.

Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth: In Scotland there are colonies in the Cairngorms, Moray and Easter Ross and in the west from Argyll north to Wester Ross. They can sometimes be attracted to flowering sprigs of lilac taken into the field.

Want to get involved? Please let us know if you are interested in taking part in any of these surveys to allow us to co-ordinate them more effectively. No skills or previous experience is necessary and everyone is welcome. We can also provide more information on old records, survey forms and further advice on survey techniques. For further information contact: Tom Prescott, Conservation Advisor, Butterfly Conservation Scotland, Mill House, Mill Road, Kingussie, Inverness-shire, PH21 1LF. Tel 0870 77061539. Email tprescott@butterfly-conservation.org

National Moth Night 2004; Saturday 22 May

2004 heralds a break with tradition for National Moth Night being the first time the event is encouraging the recording of day-flying moths. This bending of the rules allows us to target two magnificent UKBAP priority day-flying moths in Scotland, the Netted Mountain Moth and the Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth. To help further we are planning to provide colour information notes on both species with the aim of trying to encourage their recording throughout the season, not just on National Moth Night. For further information contact: Tom Prescott, 0870 77061539. tprescott@butterfly-conservation.org

Lead Partner Articles, Policies and Strategies

“Butterfly Guardians” in Argyll

Argyll is one of Scotland’s butterfly and moth “hotspots” - a stronghold for many species that are scarce in other parts of the UK due to changes in land management. In Argyll, continuation of traditional practices in many areas have maintained vital habitat for populations to flourish. However, despite this, efforts to ensure that these populations remain healthy can be hampered by lack of information, as there are few volunteers in the area visiting the sites and monitoring populations.

This has been addressed by the “Butterfly Guardians for Scotland” project, launched in 2002 by Butterfly Conservation Scotland and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Scottish Natural Heritage. Last Summer five workshops were held in Argyll to encourage local residents to help survey and monitor butterflies and moths by training them in identification techniques and survey methodologies, and then encouraging them to use their new skills to carry out voluntary work following the workshop.

All the workshops were aimed at beginners - the introductory workshops for butterflies and moths gave basic identification skills and demonstrated survey methods, other workshops focussed on particular species in the LBAP: transparent and slender Scotch burnet moths on the Isle of Mull, pearl-bordered fritillaries at Loch Creran, and marsh fritillary on the Isle of Islay.

The result? A fantastic increase in recording on the ground. The butterfly recorder for South West Scotland, Richard Sutcliffe, has entered in last year’s records and reported that the area is now better recorded than it has been for years.

However, there is still much work to be done – see ‘Events’ for details of a 15 May workshop. For more information contact: Julie Stoneman, Butterfly Conservation Scotland, Balallan House, Allan Park FK8 2QG Tel 0870 7706151, Email jstoneman@butterfly-conservation.org.

Bumper Season for Whales and Dolphins in Argyll

2003 has been a bumper season for whales and dolphins in Argyll. The Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust has received over 3,500 reports of whales, dolphins and porpoises during 2003 from local boat and wildlife operators, people working in the fishing industry and members of the general public. The information from these collected reports provides important information on the range of species and their distribution in Argyll waters. As well as the more regular species such as harbour porpoise (over 2,000 sightings), minke whale (760 sightings) and bottlenose dolphin (159 sightings) we have had some more notable visitors such as killer whales off the cairns of Coll, common and white beaked dolphins, and the distinctive scarred Risso’s dolphins. For more information on any of these species please have a look at HWDT’s online factsheets about all species found in the Hebrides on www.hwdt.org. Alternatively, if you want to report a sighting please email sightings@hwdt.sol.co.uk or phone 01688 302620.



Killer Whales

Some unusual strandings were reported in the early part of the year 2004. A Cuvier’s beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*) was found on the west coast of Mull. This toothed whale is a deep offshore species, with only one other stranding in Argyll waters since 1970. A week later, a 56ft long fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*), was washed ashore on the Isle of Coll. This species of

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baleen whales, second largest after the blue whale, favours areas in high topographic variation and have been acoustically detected through the year near the continental shelf. Sadly, the stranded animals were already dead. However due to the rarity of these strandings such an event provides us a big opportunity to find out lots of information about them. Samples of skin (for DNA analysis), blubber (for pollutants) baleen (dietary analysis) and stomach contents were taken for study. Initial analysis of the Cuvier's beaked whale showed that the stomach was full of squid beaks (its normal prey) but also a large amount of plastic bags, illustrating the severe impact that marine debris can have on marine mammals in our waters.

If you come across a whale, dolphin or porpoise on the shore please get in touch as soon as possible on 01688 302620 or email us at hwdt@sol.co.uk

Ecology and Conservation of Slender Naiad, *Najas flexilis*

Did you know that Scottish lochs are a European stronghold for a type of naiad? The naiads of the classical Greek stories were nymphs of fresh water bodies and presided over rivers, burns, springs, fountains, lakes, ponds, wells and marshes. Every naiad was intimately connected to her body of water and her very existence depended on it. If the water body dried up, its naiad expired. So, has the European Commission just gone too far this time in giving legal protection to wee, mythical goddesses?

Slender naiad, *Najas flexilis*, is actually an aquatic macrophyte that has been recorded in 38 Scottish lochs since 1980. It grows completely submerged in oligo-mesotrophic lochs, with populations recorded in the Uists, some of the inner Hebridean islands, west mainland and the Lunan Burn lochs of Perthshire. Its rarity, inconspicuous appearance and inaccessible habitat meant that little was known about its ecology and status until quite recently. However, this has begun to change over the last ten years since it became a 'European Protected Species' (one of only four EPS of plant in Scotland) and a qualifying interest for five Scottish cSACs (candidate Special Areas of Conservation), as well as a 'priority species' on the UKBAP.

The seminar provided an opportunity for the 40 or so attendees, mainly from SNH and SEPA but also other Government agencies and NGOs, to hear the results of the latest work on the species. The keynote speaker was Dr Ruth Wingfield who presented the results of an SNH-funded PhD project on the autecology of slender naiad, which was undertaken at the University of Glasgow (full report at <http://www.snh.org.uk/testmembers/index2.htm>)

The presentations demonstrated that, although slender naiad remains an enigmatic species, we do now at least have a far better idea on its status and ecology. Recent attempts at managing sites for the species have used the results of the latest ecological research, which showed that, like the naiads of mythology, slender naiad is particularly sensitive to detrimental changes to its aquatic habitat (such as eutrophication).

For further information on the presentations, contact martin.gaywood@snh.gov.uk

Scottish Squirrel Strategy

Scotland supports 75% of the UK's red squirrel population. This species is facing a number of threats, including competition from the grey squirrel, conflicting management objectives for woodland habitats, deforestation for developments and disease. The [Scottish Strategy](#) for Red Squirrel Conservation provides a framework for supporting long-term red squirrel conservation in Scotland in the face of these threats

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter, please do get articles to [Jo Lenthall](#), Scotland LBAP Project Officer, Scottish Biodiversity Forum, by 25 June 2004.